



Partnership  
for Aflatoxin  
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour la  
lutte contre les  
aflatoxines en Afrique

Parceria para o  
controlo das  
aflatoxinas na África

الشراكة من أجل التحكم في  
الأفلاتوكسين في أفريقيا

## Aflatoxin Partnership Newsletter

VOLUME II ISSUE II

MAY 2014

### CAADP celebrates 10 years since inception

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), celebrated 10 years since inception during its Partnership Platform Meeting (PPM) in Durban, South Africa on 18-21 March, 2014. CAADP is the African Unions continent-wide framework within which African countries plan to accelerate economic growth, eliminate hunger, reduce poverty and enhance food and nutrition security, through agriculture-led development. The 10<sup>th</sup> CAADP PPM is held at a time when the continent is celebrating 2014 as the “Year of Agriculture and Food Security” as declared by the AU Assembly of Heads of States and Government. The theme for the Year of Agriculture and Food Security is: ***Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity: Harnessing opportunities for inclusive***

***growth and sustainable development.*** The meeting’s primary objective was to facilitate effective engagement among the various stakeholders to demonstrate recommitment to CAADP as well as harmonization, coordination, and mutual accountability for agricultural transformation in the next decade. The meeting brought together participants from Africa and beyond to discuss and develop detailed investment plans for scaling agricultural development in Africa. The CAADP PPM also looked back at CAADP last 10 years to reflect on its successes and failures to map ways forward for the next decade in agricultural transformation in Africa. The meeting emphasized the need for African Heads of States to continue to strengthen their commitments to the CAADP process to achieve greater coordination and results.



The AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, speaking on behalf of the AUC Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, said: “The deeper we commit to the CAADP process, the greater the level of coordination, harmonization and alignment to the strategy and priorities of Africa’s agricultural transformation”. Her statement was echoed throughout the meeting by several speakers and presenters. The meeting emphasized the increased focus on inclusive and sustainable growth through agriculture in Africa.

## PACA side event held at CAADP PP meeting

During the 10<sup>th</sup> CAADP PPM, PACA organized a side event to share information with stakeholders on its country and REC level activities, seek guidance from Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on selection process for PACA pilot countries, and share information on the effects of aflatoxins in agriculture, health and trade in African nations.

Within the CAADP framework, PACA aims to strengthen national and regional mutual learning, as well as country engagement to advance the agriculture and food security agenda on the continent. PACA also aims to improve access to quality data, monitoring, evaluation and mutual

accountability on aflatoxin related issues in Africa. The meeting was attended by representatives of RECs, international organizations, government officials and others. A draft set of criteria was discussed for selecting five countries for piloting key aflatoxin control activities, such as data collection on aflatoxin prevalence, reviewing opportunities to incorporate aflatoxin control into National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (NAFSIPs), and conducting a country-led aflatoxin situation analysis, if needed. PACA also presented the draft methodology for its proposed Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAims) that it plans to implement in the five pilot countries in 2014. The Afri-

caAIMS will serve as an information hub on aflatoxin related issues in order to inform policies and interventions. During the meeting, PACA emphasized the importance of evidence based information and encouraged RECs and countries to conduct country situational analysis and develop regional action plans on aflatoxin mitigation and control.



## PACA and COMESA unite in the fight against aflatoxin in the COMESA region

The Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), in collaboration with PACA, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other institutions organized a regional workshop on the aflatoxin challenge in the COMESA member states. The meeting was held on 11-13 March, 2014 in Lilongwe,

Malawi. The meeting brought together experts, government officials, REC representatives, the AUC, the private sector and others to discuss the current aflatoxin situation in the COMESA region and develop ways forward to mitigate the problem in countries. The theme of the workshop was: “Improving Trade, Health,

and Food Security through Regional Efforts to Mitigate Aflatoxin Contamination”. The regional workshop proposed a committee to develop the COMESA action plan in mitigating the aflatoxin problem in COMESA member states. The COMESA action plan will soon be available for the public.

## News and Information on Aflatoxins

### A Technical Officer joins the PACA Secretariat

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

30 June—03 July  
2014 |

Aflatoxin Control  
Measures: a Basis for  
Improved Health in  
Developing Coun-  
tries

Lyon, France

07-09 October 2014 |

PACA Partnership  
Platform Meeting

Addis Ababa,  
Ethiopia

PACA welcomes its new technical officer, Dr. Benoit Gnonlonfin, a native from Benin, to join the team of Dr. Amare Ayalew, Program Manager, Mrs. Wezi Chunga-Sambo and Ms. Winta Sintayehu, Program Officers for PACA. Dr. Gnonlonfin joins PACA from the Biosciences eastern and central Africa (BeCA) ILRI Hub in Nairobi, Kenya where he served as a post-doc scientist for



over 2 years. Dr. Gnonlonfin brings extensive experience with over 15 years in the field of mycotoxins and

aflatoxins specifically. Prior to joining PACA, Dr. Gnonlonfin worked on the Capacity and Action for Aflatoxin Reduction in Eastern Africa (CAAREA) project within BeCA. He joined the PACA secretariat on April 01, 2014 and sits with the rest of the team at the African Union Commission. PACA welcomes Dr. Benoit Gnonlonfin and wishes him success in his new position.

### PACA Steering Committee meets in Dakar, Senegal

PACA's first Steering Committee meeting of 2014 was held on 18-20 February in Dakar, Senegal. The Steering Committee meets biannually to review progress on aflatoxin control activities, discuss activities to be implemented in 2014 as part of the strategic plan and review and approve the PACA budget. At the meeting the Steering Committee discussed

progress and activities since the previous meeting, updates from Steering Committee members on activities related to aflatoxins, the draft PACA monitoring and evaluation framework, and activities to be implemented in 2014. The Steering Committee reviewed and gave guidance to PACA's work plans and budget for 2014, 2015 and 2016. On the margins of the Steering Committee meeting, the secretariat

and the Steering Committee members were able to meet with development partners to discuss the current structure and PACA's implementation plan in 2014. This meeting helped craft ways forward for PACA to implement its activities within its mid-term strategic plan 2014-2017. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held in late August, 2014.

## PACA Steering Committee and secretariat visit farmers in rural Senegal

On the margins of the PACA Steering Committee meeting in Dakar, Senegal, a group of Steering Committee members, secretariat staff and development partners visited farmers in rural Senegal to see current efforts to mitigate aflatoxin in maize and groundnuts. National organizations are collaborating with several partners such as International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agriculture Service (USDA-AFS), and African Agriculture Technology Foundation (AATF) to de-



velop and promote biological control in Senegal and other countries. The group met with several community members at a site where aflatoxin has been mitigated using biological control and other measures, and visited crop storages and local oil-

extraction sites. The visit to the villages of Diourbel and Nioro was an opportunity for those attending to gain first-hand information on the needs of the communities and community perceptions of the aflatoxin problem and its impact on their livelihoods.



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

03-04 June 2014 |  
 PACA Inception  
 Workshop  
 Kampala, Uganda

## PACA's new Website in Development

As part of transitioning to the African Union Commission, PACA is developing a new website to serve as an information hub on aflatoxin related issues. Eventually, the website will include the PACA Online Data Management System (PODMS) that will serve as a one-stop aflatoxin information

harbor in the health, agriculture and health sector. The website will aim to increase awareness on aflatoxin issues, increase visibility and impact as well as avail evidence based information on possible intervention areas in countries. PACA will launch its new website on the margins of the PACA Inception Workshop on PACA Pilot Country Activities and the new-

ly developed Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS) that will be held late May at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The website will keep its current name: [aflatoxinpartnership.org](http://aflatoxinpartnership.org) and will soon be available for public use.

## EAC conducts project inception workshop on aflatoxin

In collaboration with USAID and IITA, the East African Community (EAC) organized a two-day workshop on Aflatoxin Control Program on 06-07 March 2014 in Bujumbura, Burundi. According to the Minister of Health of the Republic of Burundi, the 27<sup>th</sup> EAC Council of Ministers meeting held in 2013 tasked the EAC to fast track the implementation of the EAC Regional

Aflatoxin Project. The workshop's main objectives were to introduce some of the components and implementation arrangements for the project and constitute the Regional Working Expert Group of Aflatoxin (REWGA). PACA program manager, Dr. Amare Ayalew, attended the meeting and presented on the PACA Strategy towards an Africa free from

the harmful effects of aflatoxins. EAC aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders given the complex nature of the problem. [WEBSITE](#)



**EAC countries**  
 source: google.com

## PACA's first Partnership Platform Meeting to be held on 07- 09 October, 2014

The first **Partnership Platform Meeting** (PPM) of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control In Africa (PACA) – during the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security 2014 – and will serve as an information sharing platform where various stakeholders will be able to discuss PACA's Strategy and approaches to reducing aflatoxins on the continent. This is also an opportunity where stakeholders will discuss how to engage and deepen partnerships to create synergies around the current efforts on the continent.

The PACA PPM will bring together the full array of stakeholders involved in the management of aflatoxins, including the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), national governments, the private sector, health organizations, regulators, civil society groups, and development

partners.

The PPM will create a unique forum to:

1. Embrace the PACA Mid-Term Strategic Plan as a driving instrument for attainment of results and impact;
2. Share implementation challenges and receive input from stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of PACA's current activities;
3. Exchange information, share experiences and lessons in aflatoxin mitigation and management, including evidence from recent studies;
4. Identify and deepen partnerships to create synergies and strengthen programs aligned with the PACA Strategy and Mid-Term Strategic Plan; and
5. Engage all stakeholders to support efforts in the fight against aflatoxins on the African continent.

The PACA Partnership Platform Meeting will be held at the Afri-

can Union Commission, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 7-9 October 2014.



Partnership  
Platform  
Meeting

7-9 October 2014

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

## The aflatoxin challenge to the private sector

Aflatoxins are highly carcinogenic compounds produced by species of *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*. Aflatoxins affect the various sectors of health, trade and agriculture. Small scale farmers and other private sector players are most affected by high levels of contaminated products in the market. During the COMESA workshop on the aflatoxin challenge in the COMESA region, Mr. Gerald Makau Masila, the Executive Director of the East Africa Grain Council (EAGC), presented on the challenges of aflatoxin to the private sector in East Africa.

The EAGC collected information from various private institutions on the effects of aflatoxins on their businesses, and the various control measures they use to address the issue. According to Mr. Masila, the

private sector is facing major challenges due to aflatoxin contamination of staple crops such as maize and groundnuts in East Africa. In 2008, companies were buying significant amounts of maize from the Eastern province of Kenya. The maize was later found to be contaminated with high levels of aflatoxins and was condemned, as a result. The companies lost millions of dollars and were left with the contaminated maize that later cost them about 1 million Kenyan Shillings to incinerate (200 bags of contaminated maize). Others have kept contaminated maize in storage for the past six years, which takes up a lot of storage space and results in a huge economic loss. Similar experiences have been recorded in the groundnuts market in East Africa. In crops such as rice, the demand and its shortage outweighs the concerns over aflatoxin contamination and its

effects.

Currently, most millers test every consignment brought from farmers for aflatoxin levels. However, the expensive nature of aflatoxin testing adds to the overall cost of processing and selling foods that will in turn increase the cost of food, in general.

In order to address the challenges posed by aflatoxin contamination, the private sector is trying to find cheaper aflatoxin testing kits for frequent use by all stakeholders along the value chain. The private sector ensures that it only purchases grains that are tested and fall below acceptable levels of aflatoxins, based on the East Africa Community (EAC) standards i.e. 10 ppb. The industry also started ensuring that it procures well cleaned and dried maize with seed moisture content not exceeding 13%, which also adds to cost of operations. Several partners have been able to help in training staff on aflatoxins, proper storage and quality management, as well as help in the development of policy program for quality issues. Continuous field surveys, as well as random sampling during harvest, are



### Regional Grain Trade Flows & EAC regional Integration

## The aflatoxin challenge to the private sector—continued

also procedures that are being used by the private sector to reduce aflatoxin levels in products. However, these measures have huge monetary implications for the private sector, as well as the consumer.

The EAGC assists its member states by developing partnerships with various stakeholders to address aflatoxin issues, as well as developing a comprehensive

training program. The lack of awareness and education of farmers and all stakeholders along the value chains exacerbates the aflatoxin problem. Mr. Masila emphasized the importance of educating public officials and the general public on the aflatoxin issue and encouraging good agricultural and post-harvest practices, at all levels. He also stressed the need for building or strengthening laboratories

that test for aflatoxins. While there is progress in addressing the tremendous aflatoxin challenge, significant work remains.

“AFRICA FREE FROM THE HARMFUL  
EFFECTS OF AFLATOXINS”

### CONTACT US:

Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa  
(PACA). Dept. of Rural Economy & Agriculture  
African Union Commission

PO Box 3243  
Addis Ababa W21K19  
Ethiopia

[www.aflatoxinpartnership.org](http://www.aflatoxinpartnership.org)